(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the proposed Foundation would be monitored by the scientific community on the lines of National Science Fund of the United States; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SCINENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (d) A recommendation has been made by the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (SAC-PM) for setting up an autonomous National Science and Engineering Research Foundation on the lines of the National Science Foundation of USA. The proposal is presently at the stage of inter-Ministerial consultations.

Transgenic Crops in the country

3142. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has now become a major player in the field of transgenic crops by achieving coverage area of 50,000 hectares;

(b) whether it is also a fact that India had hiked its Bt. Cotton area coverage by 400 per cent between 2002-04;

(c) if so, the percentage of increase in Andhra Pradesh since introduction of Bt. Cotton in the country; and

(d) the manner in which India is planning to galvanise the global biotech crop market in the next three years?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Sir, according to the information published by International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) in 2005, India is placed at seventh position by achieving cultivation of Bt. Cotton in area of 1.3 million hectares during 2005 out of 21 countries cultivating transgenic crops globally.

(b) Yes, it is a fact that Bt. Cotton cultivation area had increased by 400 per cent between year 2002 to 2004 and 160 per cent from 2004 to 2005 in the country as per the report published by ISAAA.

(c) Bt. Cotton cultivation in Andhra Pradesh has increased by about 600 per cent by the year 2005 since its introduction in 2002, as per the seed sales data available with the Department.

(d) India is providing financial support, technical and regulatory guidance to the investigators for development of new biotech crops to produce novel products like pharmaceuticals, speciality and fine chemicals which have specific global market requirements.

Dilution in level of excellence in R&D institutions

3143. SHRI DARA SINGH:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have stated that no policy should be taken which will dilute the levels of excellence in our research and development (R&D) and educational institutions;

(b) how many projects under his Ministry in IITs and IIMs are being supported by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Department of Science and Technology and Department of Bio-Technology where he does not favour reservation policy; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to ensure that nothing should be done that will dampen India's efforts to compete in World Markets?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) The Government of India do not have a policy to dilute the levels of excellence in research and development (R&D) and educational institutions.

(b) Ministry of Science & Technology (Department of Science & Technology, Department of Biotechnology, Council of Scientific & Industrial Research) has funded about 250 R&D projects for implementation in IITs and no projects have been funded to IIMs during the last two financial years. Funding of R&D projects to IITs and R&D institutes, etc. is based on peer Review and competitive excellence and has no linkage to the reservation policy of Government of India.

(c) The Government of India have implemented several innovative programmes like Fund for Infrastructure in S&T in educational institutes, training quality manpower in advanced areas of Science & Technology, New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI), Small Business Innovation Research Initiative (SBIRI), Nano-Science & Technology, Initiative under the mechanism of Science and Engineering Research Council, Joint Funding of Programmes in the Pharmaceutical Sector involving National Laboratories, Academic Institutions and Private